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AUTHOR	Horrigan, John B.; Rainie, Lee
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ABSTRACT

The findings in this report come from a survey conducted in March 2001 in which 1,501 people interviewed in March 2000 were re-interviewed. This longitudinal approach shows that over the course of a year people's use of the Internet gets more serious and functional. Internet users were much more likely in 2001 to use the Web at their jobs and go online for work-related research. A notable number of users say their use of the Internet increases the amount of time they spend working at home. Users continue to value the Internet as a way to stay in touch with others. An extra year of Internet experience has resulted in a significant increase for all e-mailers in e-mailing family members. As people become more accustomed to the Internet, they are somewhat less likely to praise its social advantages. The increasingly important role of the Internet in users' lives is evident when it comes to money matters, and online transactions registered growth across the board between 2000 and 2001. The number of Internet users who have ever bought anything online grew 45% between 2000 and 2001. The use of the Internet to find important information or carry out tasks also grew among respondents. A year's experience online resulted in a modest decline in amount of time an average Internet user is online during a typical session. Internet users--veteran users especially--report that their use of e-mail and the Web has changed the amount of time they spend watching television, shopping in stores, and reading newspapers. As for elements of the Internet that bother people, spam e-mails lead the way, and a substantial number of Internet users complain that they have received unwanted e-mails with sexual content. An appendix includes a table comparing changes in Internet activities between March 2001 and March 2000, and charts showing a comparison for 2000. (AEF)

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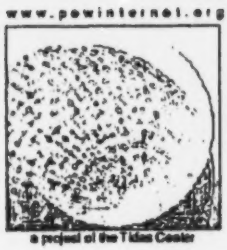

Pew Internet & American Life PROJECT

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Getting Serious Online

As Americans gain experience, they use the Web more at work, write emails with more significant content, perform more online transactions, and pursue more activities online

Principal authors: John B. Horrigan, Senior Researcher
Lee Rainie, Director

Pew Internet & American Life Project
1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW – Suite 710
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-296-0019
http://www.pewinternet.org/

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Summary of Findings

The status of the Internet is shifting from being the dazzling new thing to being a purposeful tool that Americans use to help them with some of life's important tasks. As Internet users gain experience online, they increasingly turn to the Internet to perform work-related tasks, to make purchases and do other financial transactions, to write emails with weighty and urgent content, and to seek information that is important to their everyday lives.

These findings come from a survey we conducted in March 2001 in which we reinterviewed 1,501 people whom we first talked to in March 2000. This longitudinal approach shows that over the course of a year people's use of the Internet gets more serious and functional. Internet users do more kinds of things online after they gain experience, especially related to their jobs, even as they spend a bit less time online during their typical sessions. As they gain experience, many Net surfers seemed less dazzled by the Internet. As a result, they are less likely to email a family member on a daily basis. Still, they are more likely than before to turn to the Internet to share worries or seek advice from those close to them. At the same time, *users value the Internet as much or more than ever*. This suggests that time online breeds competence and self-assurance for users; they are more efficient at what they do online and what they use email to accomplish. As Internet use is woven more into the daily lives of users, they find ways to get more out of it while spending less time with it.

Increased workplace use
Internet users were much more likely in 2001 than a year earlier to use the Web at their jobs and go online for work-related research. More of them logged on from work and they logged on more frequently than in the past. Fully 44% of those who have Internet access at work say their use of the Internet helps them do their jobs.

Our ongoing monthly tracking poll in January 2002 showed that about 55 million people, now go online from work, up from 43 million who reported using the Internet at work in March 2000. This tracking poll is different from the longitudinal work that was done in March 2000 and March 2001 and it represents the most current reading we have on the size of the online-at-work population.

In March 2001, 65% of those with Internet access on the job said they log on at least once a day – and many more reported they were going online several times a day. On a typical day, 36% of those who had access to the Internet at work say they did work-related research online, up from 25% a year earlier.

Increased work at home – and less time in traffic for some, thanks to telecommuting
The Internet fosters working at home. A notable number of users say their use of the Internet increases the amount of time they spend working at home – 14% say the time working at home has increased and 5% say the time working at home has decreased. Internet veterans are more likely to say the Internet increases time working at home.

The Internet's impact on commuting in traffic is not great, as only 6% say their Internet use had lessened the amount of time they spent in traffic. However, many of those who report doing more work at home also report they are spending less time in traffic. For the 10 million Internet veterans who say they work more at home now, about 3 million are spending less time commuting in traffic.

Significant growth in serious email

As Internet users have begun to turn to the Internet with serious purposes in mind, they continue to value the Internet as a way to stay in touch with others. Fully 84% of email users have used email to stay in touch with family members and 80% have used it to contact friends. Both figures are up a bit from the year before.

An extra year of Internet experience has resulted in a *70% increase* for all emailers in emailing family members for advice and a *63% increase* in those sending emails to family members expressing worries. Similar spikes were seen in people's willingness to write emails with that kind of content to their friends.

As Internet use becomes a normal part of life's rhythms, people are somewhat less likely to praise its social advantages. In March 2001, 79% of Internet users said that the email was "very" or "somewhat" useful for keeping in touch with family, which is a decline from the 88% of the same respondents who said this in March 2000. These users also report a drop in the frequency of emailing key family members and key friends. The weekly email is the staple for most Internet users, as about 50% of all Internet users email family and friends once a week.

These changes in some users' perspectives are understandable. The initial excitement and fun of emailing a distant friend or family member is bound to make people at first herald the way the Internet enhances the feeling of closeness. Email has gone from the remarkable to the reliable, but the lower buzz associated with the Internet has not supplanted the clear finding that Americans see the Internet as a good tool for keeping in touch with others.

More online transactions

The increasingly important role of the Internet in users' lives is also evident when it comes to money matters. Online transactions registered growth across the board between 2000 and 2001. Internet users were more likely to have made purchases after they gained experience, and they were more likely to have done online banking, participated in online auctions, bought stocks or bonds, and made travel reservations. The largest growth in most of those areas came among those who were newcomers to the Internet in March 2000. With a year's passage of time, they became more comfortable with money-related activities online.

The number of Internet users who have ever bought anything online grew 45% between 2000 and 2001 from 40 million to 58 million. Purchases of travel services grew 59%, from 29 million people who said they had made such a purchase to 46 million. Growth in

online banking and participating in online auctions were also strong, with 79% and 83% more people, respectively, saying they had done these activities.

More online activities

The use of the Internet to find important information or carry out tasks also grew among our respondents. An average user in March 2000 had tried about 11 activities online, compared to an average user a year later who had performed about 14 activities online. (We are comparing answers to questions about 24 different activities online; an appendix lists all 24 activities and shows their growth.) More people used the Web to get health care information, news, financial information, and product information. The largest increments of growth in those types of activities came among Internet veterans.

Less time online overall: The seven-minute drop-off

We found that a year's experience online results in a modest decline in the amount of time an average Internet user is online during a typical session. In March 2001, such a session lasted about 83 minutes, compared to 90 minutes for an average session the year before. Of course, there is great flux in people's time spent online. Some Internet users are spending more time online, especially those who use the Internet at work and those who find new things to do online. Conversely, some are spending less time online and they tend to report that they don't have as much time as before to be online. Some say they don't find using the Internet as appealing as they did before.

Changed time use – less TV and shopping in stores

Internet users—veteran users especially—report that their use of email and the Web has changed the amount of time they spend watching TV, shopping in stores, and reading newspapers. One-quarter of all Internet users say that the Internet has decreased the time they spend watching television, with fully one-third (31%) of veterans saying this. Nearly one in five (18%) say Internet use has meant they spend less time shopping in stores, with 28% of Internet veterans and 29% of those who have bought something online saying this. The Internet has also prompted some users to spend less time reading newspapers; 14% say this, with 21% of Internet veterans reporting a decline in newspaper reading. However, Internet users, and veterans in particular, are active online surfers for news, so they might be simply switching time with the paper to time with the online version.

More spam complaints, especially about pornography

As for elements of the Internet that bother people, spam emails lead the way (especially from marketers), and a substantial number of Internet users complain that they have received unwanted emails with sexual content. More than four in ten Internet users (44%) in March 2001 said that unwanted "spam" emails were a problem for them, a large increase from 33% who said this in March 2000. And many report getting so much spam that it is hard for them to get to the emails that matter to them. Most Internet users (56%) have received an email with adult content or advertising adult Web sites; 20% say this happens often.

GETTING SERIOUS ONLINE

Introduction

The Pew Internet & American Life Project, in a series of reports starting in May 2000, has found that email and the Internet foster social connectedness. Our first report, "Tracking Life Online," found that Internet users perceive email as a valuable way to stay in touch with family and friends, with many people—especially women—reporting that email helps them feel more connected to their families and friends. Other Pew Internet Project reports underscore how the Internet has been integrated into people's social lives in positive ways. Online communities are very popular and many participants report that cyber communities result in meaningful social contacts. Senior citizens embrace email as a way to keep up with children and grandchildren, and teenagers are among the most ardent Internet surfers. Teens "hang out" online in ways their parents did on the telephone or at the burger shop.

In this report, the Pew Internet & American Life Project traces the same Internet users from one year to the next. In March 2000, we interviewed 3,533 Americans, inquiring if they used the Internet and if so, what they do when they surf the Web and use email to stay in touch with family and friends. In March 2001, we reinterviewed 1,501 of the people we talked with in our March 2000 sample. Throughout this report, we compare the answers we got in 2001 to the answers we got from the same people in 2000. This provides a rich picture of how people's Internet use changed over the course of a year.

Matching the 1,501 people from our March 2001 survey to the previous year, 57% said they were Internet users as of March 2001 – compared to the 46% of them who were Internet users in March 2000. As we did in March 2000, we asked people how the Internet has affected the way they keep up with family and friends. We probed whether and how often people go online for work-related tasks and we inquired into the kinds of activities people do online. Further, we pursued some new themes in March 2001, examining the impact of the Internet on people's time-use and looking into people's feelings about some of the Internet's possible "hassle factors" such as unwanted spam emails.

Not only do we explore how people's Internet use has changed in the aggregate between 2000 and 2001, we also examine how different kinds of users have changed their surfing patterns. A consistent finding throughout our reports is that the length of time a person has been using the Internet is a strong predictor of how often a person goes online and how much a user does on the Internet. The longer a person has been online, the more likely he or she is to have surfed for health care information, sent an instant message, or purchased a product over the Internet.

To explore the impact of users' experience levels more carefully, we compare the Internet's veterans or the "long wired," who have been online for more than three years as of March 2000, to "mid-range" users who were online for two to three years in March 2000, and "newcomers" who were online for a year or less in March 2000. In analysis of

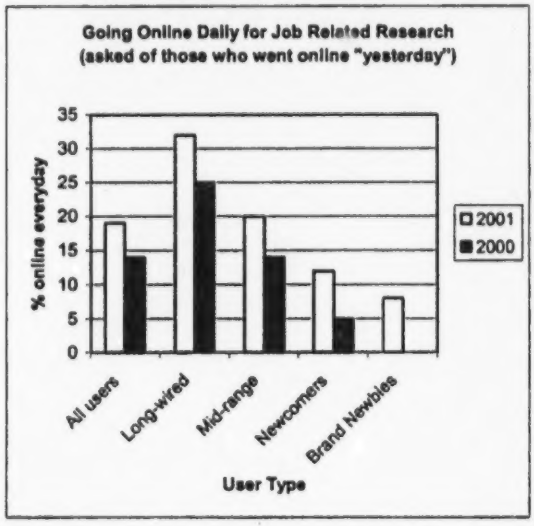
these three categories below, when we refer to, say, newcomers in 2000 and newcomers in 2001, we refer to the same respondents and how their responses compared to what they told us in March 2000. We also analyze new users in 2001, that is, the people in our March 2000 sample who were not then online, but subsequently gained Internet access. These are the "brand newbies."

Part 1: The Internet and work

As of January 2002 some 55 million American adults said they go online from work. For comparison's sake, there were 43 million with work access in March 2000. That compares to the 103 million who currently have access at home. Many Americans, of course, have Internet access at both home and work. The basic breakdown is this: 49% of Internet users have access *only* at home; 8% of Internet users have access *only* at work; 39% have access at both home and work; and the remaining 4% have access in other places altogether such as at school or a local library.

When the Internet population was growing rapidly in the late 1990s and 2000 the growth in home access was the driver. The Internet was domesticated. However, our longitudinal study shows that the importance of the Internet in America's workplaces is increasing. In comparison with the year 2000, people went online at work more frequently in 2001 with much of that extra Internet activity devoted to job-related research.

For those with access at work, daily Internet surfing is the norm. Some 55% of those with Internet access at work went online on a typical day in 2001, up from 50% in 2000. In many cases, they were logging on more frequently during the day at work than they did in the previous survey.



An increase in job-related research

The increase in Internet use at the office is strongly tied to increases in those who do online research for job-related tasks. Of course, there is a great deal of email use at some offices, but the striking growth came in the frequency with which people were doing work-related research on the Web. In March 2001, 19% of all Internet users said they were doing work-related research on a typical day online, up from 14% on a typical day during the survey taken the previous year.

The emphasis on job-related research is characteristic of the Internet elite, with 2001's "long wired" veterans four times as likely to do this as 2001's new users (i.e.,

"brand newbies").[1] Online job-related research has become the norm for fully one-third of the Internet's most veteran users, as 32% of this group says they turn to the Internet for work research on a typical day. However, growth in daily job-related research is most rapid among the less experienced. Since newcomers tend to have lower levels of educational attainment and lower incomes than the long-wired—and thus a different profile of occupations—the rapid growth suggests that the Internet as a tool at work is disseminating to a wide range of occupations

Shifts in Internet usage

These changing patterns of workplace Internet use are part of shifts in the mix of people's home versus workplace Internet use. Americans are spending a bit more time online at work and a bit less time online at home. Home-based Internet access remains the primary way people go online. However, on a typical day, there was a drop in the percentage of people who used the Internet only from home and an increase in the percentage who went online only from work. Three in five Internet users (59%) went online during a typical day in March 2000; a year later that number had dropped to 54%. Correspondingly, those who said they had gone online just from work increased slightly to 21% in 2001 from 18% a year earlier. Moreover, fewer Internet users are logging on at home several times a day, while more are logging on several times a day at the office.

The shifting patterns of where people go online are associated as well with the time of day they log on. We asked people what time of day they go online, and in March 2000 there was a fair number of evening and night owls. Fully half (49%) said they log on after 5 p.m. One year later, 40% of this group was going online during these hours. It may be that repeated Internet visits during the workday are taxing people's stamina for surfing in the evening or that some leisure surfing is taking place during the workday.

The increasingly porous boundary between home and work

Growing numbers of Americans have access to the Internet at work and at home. That is especially true for Internet veterans: 56% of the "long wired" say they have access in both places, compared to only 32% of Internet novices who report access at work and at home.

The Internet's growing role in the workplace has translated to changes in the amount of time people spend doing work – whether it is at the office or at home. One in seven Internet users say their use of the Internet has resulted in an increase in the amount of time they spend working at home and one in ten say the Internet increases the time they spend working at the office.

Although the magnitudes here are not great, the Internet veterans report greater impacts. Of those who have been online for more than three years, 21% report that the Internet has

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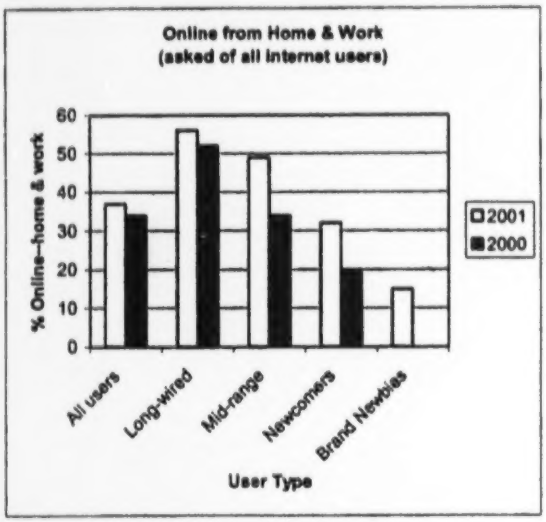
[1] In the chart on page 6 and those that follow, the "long-wired" are those who have been online for more than three years. The "mid-range" users have been online from two to three years; "newcomers" were online for about one year as of March 2000. The "brand newbies" came online between March 2000 and March 2001.

increased the amount of time they spend working at home, while 4% report it decreases the amount of time they spend working at home. These veterans also report large impacts when it comes to spending time at the office, but the effects cut both ways. Eleven percent of veterans say the Internet has increased the time they spend at the office; 11% say it decreases time at the office. This compares with 10% of Internet users who report an increase in time spent at the office and 6% who report a decrease.



Telecommuting's payoff: Less time in traffic

The Internet's longest wired Internet users are the most likely to say that the Internet has resulted in them spending more time working at home. For the 10 million Internet veterans who say they work more at home now, about 3 million are spending less time commuting in traffic.

The Internet's impact on work life

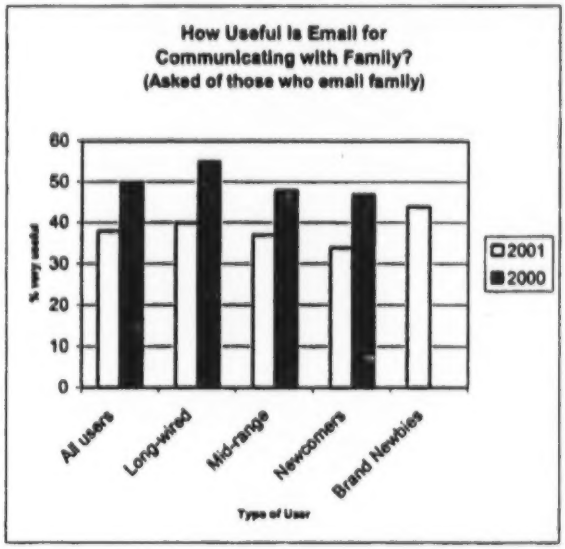
For Internet users with access at work, four in nine (44%) say that the Internet improves their ability to do their job a lot. The Internet's "long wired" users—those online for more than three years—report the greatest impact, with 55% saying the Internet has helped them at work a lot. By a large margin, those veterans who say the Internet has improved how they do their job are men—fully 60%. The effect is less pronounced for those new to the Internet, with 36% of newcomers saying the Internet has helped them a lot on the job.

Part 2: Connections to Family and Friends

Americans' engagement with the Internet as a way to stay in touch with friends and family remains strong. In March 2000, 79% of Internet users said that they email members of their immediate and extended family, a number that grew to 84% a year later. Seventy-nine percent of all Internet users said they email friends in March 2000, essentially the same as the 80% who said they email friends in March 2001.

However, as some people gain experience online their perceptions of the Internet's role in personal communication change. Fewer report that emailing is very useful for being in contact with family and friends and a notable number of email users cut back the frequency with which they email family and friends. At the same time, they show a substantial increase in the use of email for serious communication, such as sharing worries and seeking advice. All this is in the context of people continuing to value the Internet highly; 82% of veterans said that in 2001 compared with 68% who said it in 2000.

These seemingly paradoxical changes reflect a maturation process for Internet users. For many, the Internet until recently has been a "wow" technology, but with time it has receded somewhat into the background of their lives. For veteran users especially, the Internet has acquired a quotidian cast. This takes place in the context of more of people's social and professional networks going online as Internet penetration grows. A wider range of friends and contacts online makes it more acceptable to handle important matters over the Internet, especially as online experience breeds trust of the technology. The expanding population of cyberspace and users' greater comfort with the Internet changes the norms of appropriate and expected online communication. Users' initial wonderment over the technology shifts to a richer appreciation of what it can do for them, whether that means sending a credit card number or sharing an urgent worry.



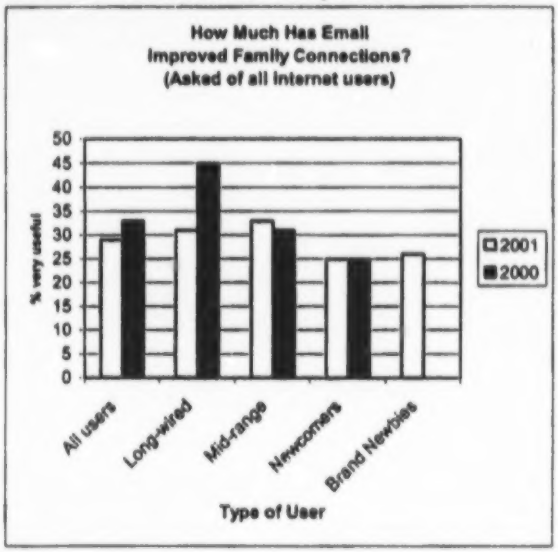
Extensive contacts, less fervor

In March 2001, 79% of those who email family members reported that email is "very useful" or "somewhat useful" for keeping up with family members, down from 88% who said that in March 2000. The decrease is attributable to the falling share of people rating email as "very useful" for communicating with family members; 50% said that in March 2000, but that fell to 38% in March 2001. The drop is most pronounced for

Internet's "long-wired," suggesting that the longer one has been online, the less likely one is to rate email as a "very useful" communications tool.

In fact, brand newbies in 2001 are most likely to see the Internet as a "very useful" way to communicate with family; 44% say this versus 40% for Internet veterans. If recent history is a guide, however, this effect may be short-lived for people who came online between March 2000 and March 2001. People who came online during the year prior to March 2000 (i.e., novices in 2000) reported a decline in support for the idea that the Internet is "very useful" for communicating with family; 47% felt this way in 2000 but a year later that number fell to 34%.

When asked whether the Internet has improved connections with family, 60% of March 2000 respondents said the Internet has improved their connection to family members "a lot" or "some," a number that fell slightly to 56% in March 2001. One-third (33%) of the March 2000 sample said the Internet helped family connections "a lot" versus 29% who said that in March 2001. The drop is entirely a phenomenon of Internet veterans, nearly half (45%) of whom in March 2000 said the Internet helped improve connections "a lot," but only one-third (31%) said so a year later.



Consistent with the finding that Internet users are less likely to email family members, we find that a year's time means that people are less likely to say that they communicate *more* with family members now that they use email. In March 2000, 56% of those who email family members said that they communicate more with others in the family now that they have email. This number fell to 46% in 2001. At the same time, people are somewhat more likely in 2001 to say that email has improved family relationships. In March 2000, 35% of Internet users said the Internet has improved family relationships; this number increased to 39% in March 2001. Again, this suggests that though frequency of contact may decline, the Internet positive impact on family relationships does not decline.

Emailing friends

The story is similar, although the less pronounced, when people are asked about using email to communicate with friends. In March 2000, 92% of those who email friends said email was useful to stay in touch with friends, with 55% saying it was "very useful." In March 2001, 90% of people who email friends said email was a useful way to connect with friends; 52% said it was "very useful." Long-wired Internet users are largely responsible for this decrease, with this class of Internet user being the only one in which a

year's time led to a decline in support for the idea that the Internet is a "very useful" way to communicate with friends.

For connections to friends, 69% of March 2000's Internet users said the Internet improved connections to friends "a lot" or "somewhat" and 65% said this in March 2001. The share of people saying the Internet improved connections to friends changed very little, going from 37% in 2000 to 35% in 2001. Within categories of users, again it was the veterans who recorded a notable decline in enthusiasm for this proposition. Similarly, people were somewhat less likely to say email has increased the amount of communication with friends, with 61% of those who email friends saying in March 2000 that email means they communicate with friends more often, compared to 54% saying that a year later.

Other evidence of the lower Internet buzz

Other evidence from our survey points to a consistent trend of people heralding the Internet less as their online experience increases. Fully 76% of Internet users in 2000 said that the Internet improves their ability to learn new things, with 50% saying it helps "a lot." That number fell a bit to 73%, but a year later only 39% said it helps "a lot" with an increase in people saying it helps "some." As with family emailing, veterans showed the sharpest drop in saying the Internet helps a lot in learning new things, with novices maintaining a relatively high level of enthusiasm.

Daily emailing declines, but seeking advice surges

People's emailing habits have changed in a year's time, with the daily email to family and friends becoming less frequent. Accompanying this decline, however, has been a sharp increase in the use of email for important communications. Many more people in 2001 report that they use email to get advice or share worries with those close to them.

Emailing Family Members

(Asked of those who email family members)

How often do you email family members?	Every Day	Once a week	Once a month
All Users 2001	12%	50%	26%
All Users 2000	21	51	18
Long-wired in 2001	14	51	23
Long-wired in 2000	16	60	17
Mid-range 2001	12	47	31
Mid-range 2000	25	42	21
Newcomers in 2001	11	52	24
Newcomers in 2000	23	51	17
Brand Newbies	8	48	27

Long-wired: online > 3 years; **Mid-range**=online 2-3 years; **Newcomers**=online 1 year in 2000; **Brand Newbies**=came online between 3/00 & 3/01.
Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey, Internet users, n=862 for March 2001, n=723 for March 2000. Margin of error is ±4%.

Some 12% of people who have ever emailed family members sent email to a key family member every day in 2001, down from 21% in 2000. Newcomers to the Internet in 2000 had the starkest declines, suggesting a novelty effect wearing off. Similarly, about 13% of Internet users emailed a key friend on a daily basis in 2001, down from 17% in 2000. The weekly email is the staple for most Internet users, as about 50% of email users said they send electronic messages to family and friends once a week.

A closer look at the patterns of family emailing show a shift from the daily email to the monthly e-note; 26% said they emailed a family member once a month in March 2001 up

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from 18% the year before. Half reported emailing a family member once a week in March 2000 and March 2001. The same patterns were evident for those who email friends.

Looking at user categories, the relatively new users report the sharpest declines in daily emailing to family members, with most of that emailing apparently shifting to monthly missives. Even with these changes, throughout all experience levels, about half of Internet users seem content emailing a friend or family member about once a week.

Seeking Advice from Family
(Asked of those who email family members)

	Do you email a family member for advice?	Do you email a family member about something you are worried about?
	% yes	% yes
All Users 2001	56%	44%
All Users 2000	45	37
Long-wired in 2001	60	48
Long-wired in 2000	49	41
Mid-range 2001	51	45
Mid-range 2000	42	37
Newcomers in 2001	58	45
Newcomers in 2000	45	33
Brand Newbies	55	41

Notwithstanding the decline in emailing, Internet users have deepened their email contacts with others in several ways. An extra year of online experience seems to make Internet users more comfortable with using email to pursue difficult issues with family and friends. In March 2000, 37% of Internet users who email family members said they sometimes raise issues that they worry about or are upset about in emails to family. That number increased to 44% in 2001. In absolute numbers, 25 million Americans had emailed family members about worries in March 2000, but this number jumped by 60% to 40 million in March 2001.

The pattern of more serious email is more pronounced when asked about seeking advice from family members. Forty-five percent of March 2000 respondents who email family members say they do so to get advice; one year later, 56% said they had emailed a family member seeking advice. In absolute numbers, 30 million Americans had emailed family members about worries in March 2000, but this number jumped by 70% to 51 million in March 2001.

Internet users who came online in the last year and March 2000's newcomers seem particularly ardent about using the Internet to seek advice or raising worries with friends and family members. Online experience usually means a user is more likely use the Internet for any activity. This general pattern does not hold for the increases in emails seeking advice or about worries. A better explanation is that a network effect is at work. As more and more people go online, there is increased incentive to use email for all kinds of communications. Experience doesn't explain the growth in the seriousness of email as much as the fact that people rely on email to perform all kinds of important communications, regardless of their experience level online.

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For friends, the story is much the same. By March 2001, 41 million Internet users had emailed friends to share worries, up from 26 million a year earlier. Advice-seeking among friends has gone up as well, from 32 million in March 2000 to 49 million in March 2001. The largest increase in this activity is from middle users, who are the most likely in any user class to have emailed friends for advice or to share worries.

Seeking Advice From Friends
(Asked of those who email friends)

	Do you email a friend for advice?	Do you email a friend about something your worried about?
	% yes	% yes
All Users 2001	56	47
All Users 2000	48	39
Long-wired in 2001	50	43
Long-wired in 2000	51	39
Mid-range 2001	60	55
Mid-range 2000	43	41
Newcomers in 2001	59	47
Newcomers in 2000	51	37
Brand Newbies	53	41

Long-wired: online > 3 years; Mid-range=online 2-3 years; Newcomers=online 1 year in 2000; Brand Newbies=came online between 3/00 & 3/01.
Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey, Internet users, n=862 for March 2001, n=723 for March 2000. Margin of error is ±4%.

Women are still the fervent family emailers

In our May 2000 "Tracking Life Online" report, we found that women are the Internet's most enthusiastic emailers, and this finding holds up in looking at changes over the March 2000 to March 2001 timeframe. Women are much more likely to be daily emailers than men in 2001 (by a 19% to 5% margin). Similarly, women are more likely than men to find email a very useful way to keep in touch with family members. Four in nine (45%) women who email family members said this in 2001 compared with 30% of men. In March 2000, the numbers were 58% for women and 41% for men. Over time, men and women both report a decline in their feeling that email helps them connect with family and friends.

The "clicking cousins" effect and extended networks

An extra year of online experience seems to bring people more in contact with their cousins—an online "clicking cousins" effect. As already noted, 84% of the March 2001 sample say they have emailed family members, up from 79% in March 2000. This suggests that many of our March 2000 respondents who came online in the past year email family members. This increase is due in part to growth in emailing to extended family members.

When Internet users who email family members were asked in March 2000 about family members they email frequently, 5% identified a cousin as that person, a number that rose to 16% in March 2001. The "clicking cousins" effect persists when people were asked if they had started communicating via the Internet with a family member they had not been in close touch with. For those who answered "yes" to this question (29% in 2001 and 32% in 2000), nearly 4 in 10 (38%) of 2001 respondents identified a cousin as the family member with whom they began an e-dialogue. This is an increase from 26% who identified a cousin on March 2000.

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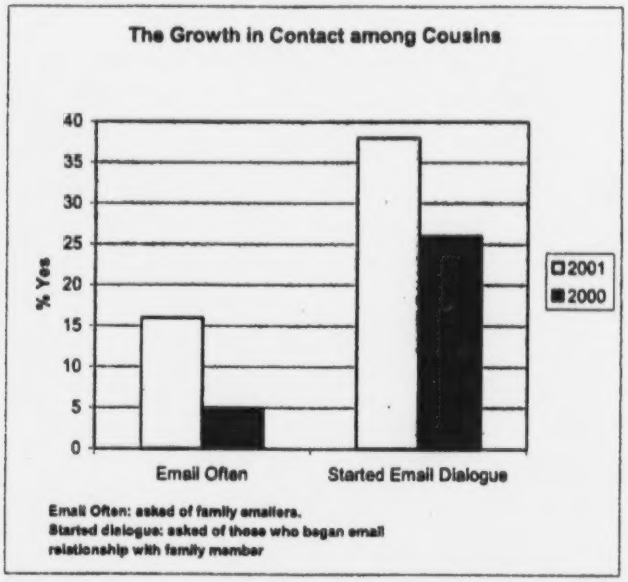
The "clicking cousins" phenomenon indicates that online experience helps extend family networks. The quick "hello" email seems to be a great way to renew family ties that have withered. Indeed, about one quarter (27%) of Internet users in 2001 said they had used the Internet to track down a friend or family member with whom they had lost touch. Twenty-nine percent of 2001 email users say they now use email to communicate regularly with a family member they had not kept up with before. The renewal of family ties via email persists over time, as evidenced by the clicking cousin's effect, which is giving electronic life to the extended family.



Part 3: Transactions and other activities online

In the 13 months of tracking polling we have done, we have asked Internet users about 52 different kinds of activities online, including their use of email and their use of the Web to do such things as get news, download music, purchase stocks, get religious information, make travel plans, research medical information, and pursue their hobbies. In the longitudinal study, we probed 24 kinds of activities in each year and observed an expanded range of things people do online. The average Internet user in March 2001 had tried at one time or another 14 of these 24 activities, an increase from 11 in March 2000. An appendix to the report lists all 24 activities and compares for 2000 and 2001 the numbers of Americans and percentage of Internet users who have done online activities. Email remains the most popular activity for Internet users. In the March 2001 survey 92% of respondents told us they were email users. (In the January 2002 tracking survey 95% of online Americans said they had sent or received email.) In March 2001, the number two activity was going online to look for information about a hobby: 78% of Internet users had done that.

The sections in this part of the report and the tables in those sections show how often all Internet users, and different classes of users, go online for activities that are broadly categorized as communications, information utilities, fun online diversions, and transactions. Comparing what Internet users did in March 2001 to a year earlier, people are generally a little bit busier when it comes to online activities, with two to four point increases for activities such as emailing, instant messaging, playing a game, getting health care information, and others. Some categories of activities are marked by high growth, some by low growth, and within categories there is often variation in growth rates depending on users' levels of experience.

Transactions

Percent of Internet users who have ever used the Internet to →	Buy products	Buy a travel service
All Users 2001	53%	42%
All Users 2000	47	34
Long-wired in 2001	68	62
Long-wired in 2000	59	46
Mid-range 2001	66	49
Mid-range 2000	51	37
Newcomers in 2001	50	36
Newcomers in 2000	34	23
Brand Newbies	32	25

Long-wired: online > 3 years; Mid-range=online 2-3 years; Newcomers=online 1 year in 2000; Brand Newbies=came online betw 3/00 & 3/01.
Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey, Internet users, n=862 for March 2001, n=723 for March 2000. Margin of error is ±4%.

The pattern of growth, especially in transactions and seeking information online, is indicative of an increasingly utilitarian Internet. People go online to save time by conducting a transaction or to satisfy specific information needs, such as health care queries or accessing a government Web site.

Money matters: High growth activities with novices leading the way

Sizable jumps have occurred in transactions, with six- and eight-point increases for buying things online and buying travel services, respectively, and a six-point increase for online auctions. All classes of users have increased the frequency of transactions, but people who were new to the Internet in March 2000 showed the most dramatic increases.

For both the purchase of any kind of product online and for travel services, newcomers in 2000 were about 50% more likely to have done these things a year later. Prior work by the Pew Internet Project has found that new Internet users are initially reluctant to conduct transactions online, but that once they take that step, they quickly become engaged with doing transactions over the Internet. These findings buttress this analysis, as familiarity with the online world fosters comfort with transactions for newcomers.

Online amusements: Low growth—for novices especially

For fun Internet activities, users report little or no growth in having gone online for hobbies, game playing, or just to seek out fun diversions. Even for newcomers, growth is tepid, perhaps because they start out at a level of activity that is close to or on par with their more experienced counterparts. The notable patterns of growth occur for listening to or downloading music and getting an audio or video clip on the Internet. Although overall growth for these categories is not great, a striking amount of it comes from "mid-range" users—people who were online about two to three years in 2000. As these users gain experience they become the group most likely to download music from the Net and are catching up quickly to veterans when it comes to accessing audio and video clips online.

Demographics may have a lot to do with the strong growth exhibited by "mid-rangers" relative to veterans. The Internet's veterans are 60% male, while 53% of "mid-rangers" are female. Age is another difference between the two groups. "Mid-rangers" are generally younger than veterans, with 22% of veterans falling in the 18 to 29 cohort, compared to 29% of middle users being between 18 and 29. The relative youth of "mid-rangers" accounts for much of the greater interest in music and video online, and women account for slightly more of the growth in these two categories than men.

Fun Activities

Percent of Internet users who have ever used the Internet to →	Hobby info.	Audio/ video clip
All Users 2001	78%	51%
All Users 2000	76	47
Long-wired in 2001	79	65
Long-wired in 2000	80	59
Mid-range 2001	84	58
Mid-range 2000	77	44
Newcomers in 2001	75	40
Newcomers in 2000	73	40
Brand Newbies	75	44
For source and definitions of user classes, see "Transactions" table above		

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Information Seeking: Low growth—except for veterans

The number of those seeking information of various kinds online has shown modest growth between March 2000 and March 2001. Only veterans show a marked growth in all of the activities we classify as information-seeking activities.

The pattern is mixed, depending on the specific information-seeking activity. For instance, many newcomers find surfing for health care a very attractive thing—it is their most popular information-seeking activity. But the newcomers who don't want to get medical information when they first go online are unlikely to use the Internet to get such information even as they gain a year's experience with using the Internet. It might be that they are concerned about the trustworthiness of such information or their personal privacy. It might also be true that over the course of a year, most of these newcomers had no particular reason to want to get health or medical information. Whatever the case, it is not something that experience seems to have affected very much.

Similarly, there is some growth in visits to government Web sites. However, much of the growth in this activity has come from newcomers. Although it is hard to pin down the reason for such rapid growth among novices, the April tax filing deadline could have drawn people to government sites for tax forms and information. And the election controversy at the end of 2000 might have stimulated traffic to government sites.

Information Seeking

Percent of Internet users who have ever used the Internet to →	Health care info.	Access to government Web sites
All Users 2001	59%	55%
All Users 2000	55	50
Long-wired in 2001	72	72
Long-wired in 2000	61	65
Mid-range 2001	65	65
Mid-range 2000	60	61
Newcomers in 2001	57	51
Newcomers in 2000	54	37
Brand Newbies	56	38
For source and definitions of user classes, see "Transactions" table above		

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Reaching out: Instant messaging takes off for novices

Email remains the dominant single activity on the Internet, with 92% of the respondents in March 2001 telling us they had sent or received email. Although the overall growth between 2000 and 2001 is small, it is concentrated among newcomers and mid-range users. The growth among middle users is probably traceable to the majority of women in this group; as our March 2000 report found, women tend to email more often than men. Instant messaging is, on average, not a quickly growing activity, but what growth is evident is found in novice and middle users.

Communications

Percent of Internet users who have ever used the Internet to →	Email	Instant messaging
All Users 2001	92%	44%
All Users 2000	89	42
Long-wired in 2001	96	47
Long-wired in 2000	94	48
Mid-range 2001	97	52
Mid-range 2000	89	44
Newcomers in 2001	93	44
Newcomers in 2000	84	37
Brand Newbies	82	33

For source and definitions of user classes, see "Transactions" table above

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Part 4: The Internet, time use, and things that annoy

As people continue to use the Internet to maintain connections with family and friends, and as the Internet takes on a more prominent role in the workplace, it is sensible to ask two questions about time use. One is whether the passage of time is associated with people spending more or less time online. The other has to do with the Internet's overall impact on how people spend their time. Do people say that the Internet changes the amount of time they spend with family and friends? What do people report about the Internet's impact on the amount of time they spend at work, shopping, commuting, or watching TV?

Seven-minute shorter sessions

With respect to the amount of time people spend on the Internet, we asked people who said they went online on the day before we contacted them to estimate about how much time they spent emailing or surfing the Web. In March 2000, the average Internet user spent about 90 minutes online during a typical session "yesterday." When asked the same question in 2001, the same set of users reported a modest decrease of about 7 minutes in the amount of time they spent online during that typical session.

Thus, Internet use is evolving in several ways: People spend less time online, but they have sampled more activities. They are less likely to herald the Internet's connective effects, but they use it for more serious purposes. This all suggests that they learn what they value online and how to go about finding it. Their online habits become more directed and efficient, allowing them to get what they need in shorter order than before.

The Internet and Time Use
(Asked of all Internet Users)

Has the Internet increased, decreased, or had no change on the amount of time you spend...	Increased	Decreased	No change
Watching television	3%	25%	72%
Shopping in stores	4	18	78
Working at home	14	5	81
Reading newspapers	5	14	81
Working at the office	10	6	84
Spending time with family	6	6	88
Spending time with friends	8	2	90
Commuting in traffic	1	6	92
Attending social events	5	2	93

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey, Internet users, n =862 for March 2001. Margin of error is ±4%.

What Internet use displaces

The following table gives a flavor of where people are finding the roughly 83 minutes or so they spend online during a typical session. By far the greatest impact comes in television viewing. Fully one-quarter of Internet users said that surfing the Internet has led to a decrease in TV time. For the Internet's most experienced users (those who have been online for three or more years), this number rises to about one-third, as 31% of those users say the Internet has decreased the amount of time they watch TV. Traditional media also takes a hit when looking at time spent reading newspapers. One in seven (14%) Internet users say the Internet has decreased the time they spend reading newspapers. For the Internet's veterans, this number rises to 21%, although these users are also the most likely to go online to get news.

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Shopping in stores is another thing people report doing less as they spend more time online. Nearly one in five (18%) of Internet users say that the Net has resulted in them spending less time shopping in stores, with only a few saying that the Internet has drawn them to shops and malls. Again, the Internet elite leads the way in using the Internet to shop; fully 28% of the Internet's long-time users report that the Internet has led to a decrease in the time they spend in stores. Online shoppers very likely use the Net to stay out of stores; 29% of people who have shopped online say they spend less time in stores due to the Internet. Of the Internet users who came online between March 2000 and 2001, only 10% said the Internet contributed to a decrease in the time they spend in stores. Other classes of users (i.e., those online about a year, or those online from two to three years) said about 11% of the time that the Internet decreased the time they spent in stores shopping.

Hassle factors – spam and email promoting porn

Even as Internet use has taken on greater importance in the workplace, and as online Americans continue to use the Internet to maintain ties with family and friends, Internet users express growing irritation with their ability to manage the nature and volume of some kinds of email. In March 2000, one-third (33%) of all Internet users said that "spam" or unwanted email messages were a problem for them. One year later, that number rose to 44%. Fully half of the Internet's most veteran users say that the volume of spam was a problem for them. Those who are new to the Internet are much less likely to cite "spam" as a problem, as only 26% of Internet novices say that such emails are problems for them.

We asked people to classify the nature of the unwanted messages they receive and, overwhelmingly, Internet users cite sales solicitations. Fully 78% of users in March 2001 said sales solicitations are the type of spam they receive, up from 68% who said this in March 2000.

We also probed into a particular type of spam that is often cited as an annoyance to Internet users—messages with adult content or from adult Web sites. More than half—56%—of U.S. email users have at one time or another received an email from an adult Web site or that contained adult content. Twenty percent report that this occurs often, with Internet veterans twice as likely as novices to receive such messages (24% for veterans versus 12% for novices). The greater incidence for veterans is likely to be nothing more than a reflection of the number of years they have been online. Their more extensive surfing habits increases the chances that traces of information identifying their email addresses have been picked up by these sites.

Appendix

Internet Activities: an overall picture of growth
This research shows a striking year-to-year growth in the number of Americans performing various activities online.

The table below presents a comparison of the number of Americans who said they had ever done a particular activity online in 2001 with the numbers for 2000. The charts in the pages that follow show a comparison for 2000 and 2001 of the percent of Internet users said they have ever done a specific activity online. In reading those charts, readers should keep in mind that the changes in percentages occurred in the context of more Americans being online in March 2001 (57%) compared with March 2000 (46%).

Internet Activities: How they changed over the course of a year

Millions of American Internet users who have ever done . . .	March 2001	March 2000	Increase
Communication Activities			
Email	100 million	75 million	33%
Instant Messages	48	36	33%
Fun Activities			
Info on a Hobby	83 million	64 million	30%
Online just for fun	66	53	25%
Video/Audio Clip	56	40	40%
Listen/Download Music	40	29	38%
Play a Game	40	30	36%
Sports Scores	38	28	36%
Information Utility Activities			
Product Information	82 million	63 million	30%
Travel Information	72	55	31%
Info on Movies/Books/Music	69	53	30%
News	64	52	23%
Health Information	64	47	36%
Government Website	60	42	43%
Job-related research	52	41	27%
Financial Information	45	38	17%
Look for Job	44	31	42%
Look for Place to Live	32	20	60%
Religious/Spiritual Info	27	18	50%
Transactions			
Buy a product	58 million	40 million	45%
Buy a travel service	46	29	59%
Online Banking	25	14	79%
Online Auction	22	12	83%
Buy/Sell Stocks	13	10	30%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey, Internet users, n=862 for March 2001, n=723 for March 2000. Margin of error is ±4%.

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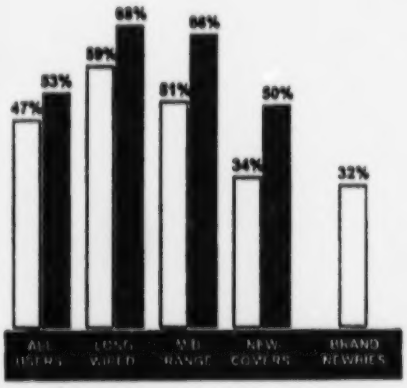
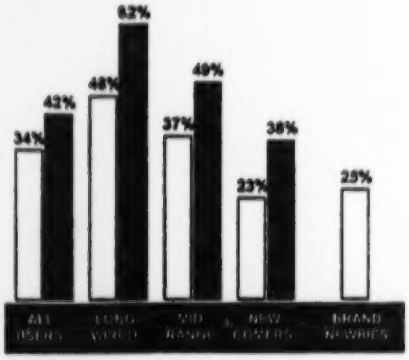
Transactions

Percentage of Internet users who have ever used the Internet to:

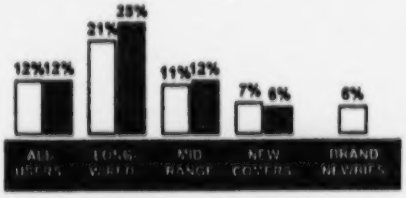
BUY PRODUCTS



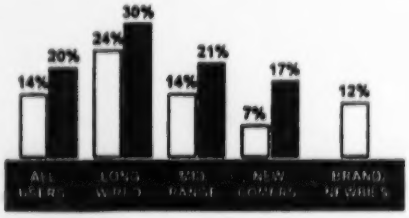
BUY A TRAVEL SERVICE



BUY/SELL STOCKS



PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE AUCTIONS



2000 2001 NEW

Long-wired = online > 3 years;
Mid-range = online 2-3 years;
Newcomers = online 1 year in 2000.
Brand Newbies =came online between 3/00 and 3/01.
Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey.
Internet users, n=862 for March 2001 n=723 for March 2000.
Margin of error is ± 4%.

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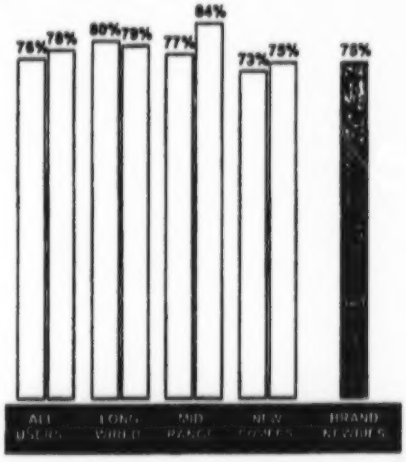
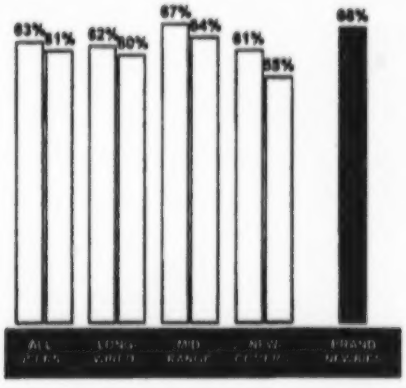
Fun Activities

Percentage of Internet users who have ever used the Internet for:

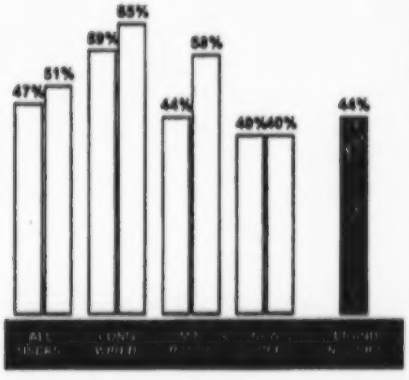
HOBBY INFO



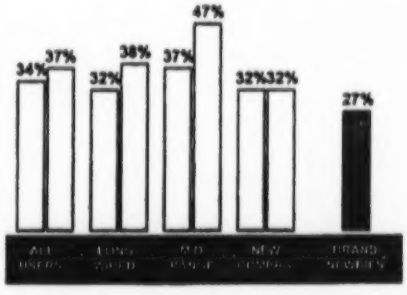
BROWSE JUST FOR FUN



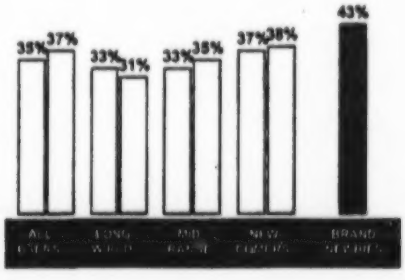
AUDIO/ VIDEO CLIP



LISTEN TO/ DOWNLOAD MUSIC



PLAY A GAME



2000 2001 NEW

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Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey. Internet users, n=862 for March 2001 n=723 for March 2000. Margin of error is ± 4%.

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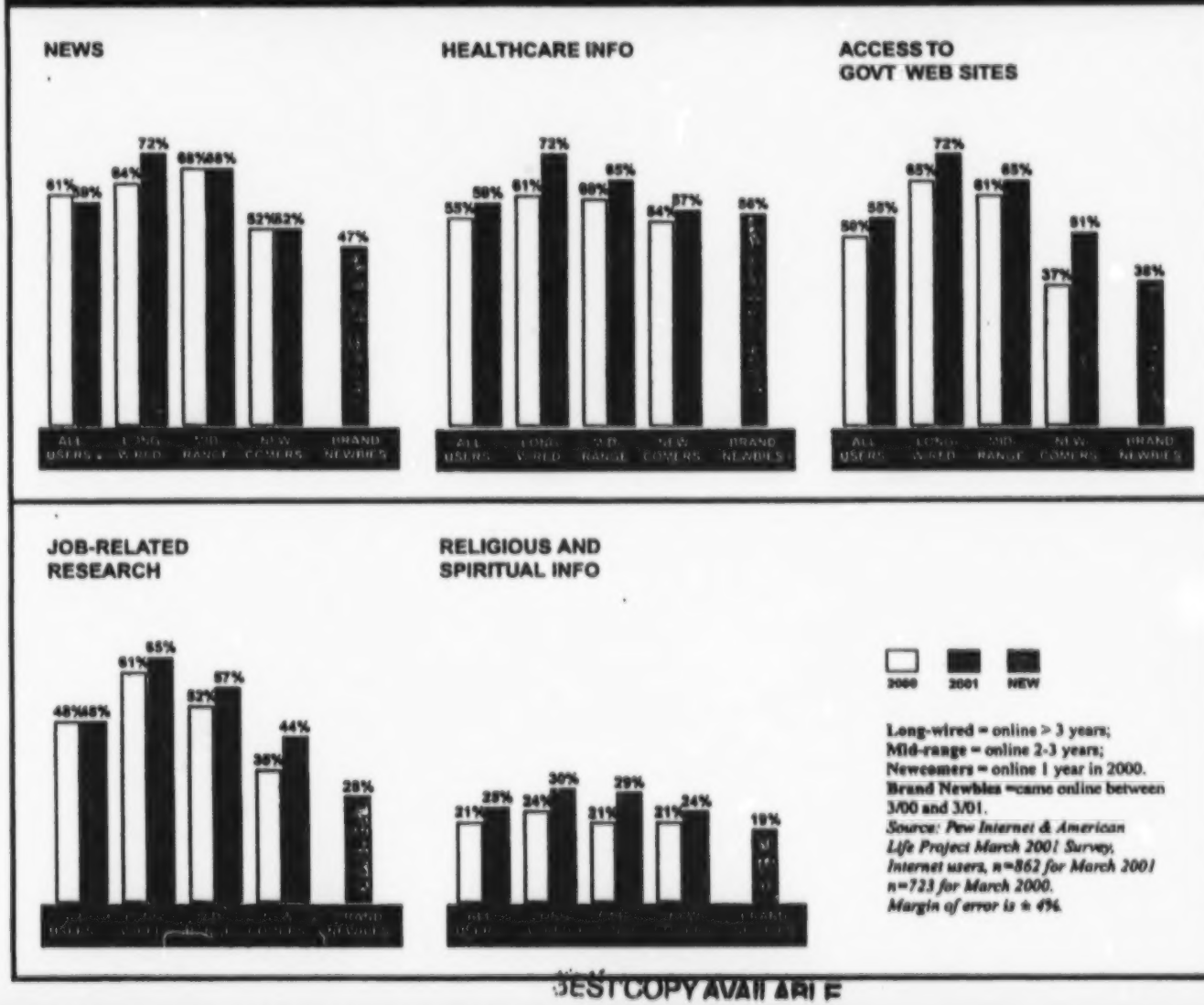
Information Utility Activities

Percentage of Internet users
who have ever used the Internet for:



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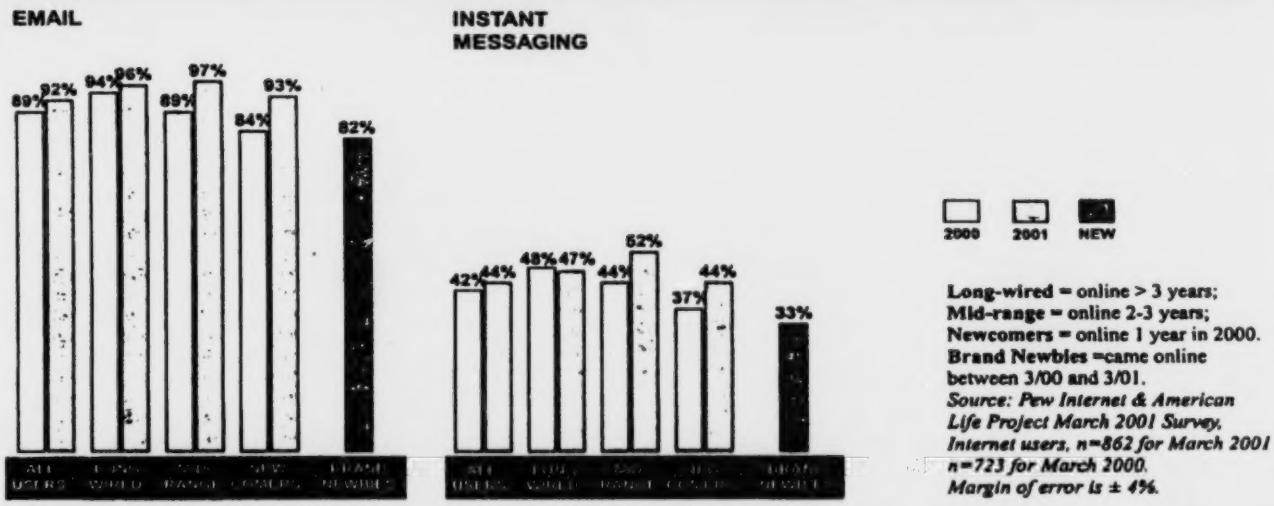
Communications

Percentage of Internet users who have ever used the Internet for:



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Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project March 2001 Survey, Internet users, n=862 for March 2001 n=723 for March 2000.
Margin of error is ± 4%.

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Methodology

This report is based on the findings of two surveys; a daily tracking survey on Americans' use of the Internet conducted March 1-31, 2000, and a callback survey conducted among the same group March 12 to April 9, 2001. Results are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates. Data is based on 1,501 cases where complete interviews were conducted in both 2000 and 2001. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based Internet users, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys may introduce some error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The original sample used for the March 2000 survey is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed numbers). The design of the sample achieves this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange, and bank number.

New sample was released daily and was kept in the field for at least five days. This ensures that complete call procedures were followed for the entire sample. Additionally, the sample was released in replicates to make sure that the telephone numbers called are distributed appropriately across regions of the country. At least 10 attempts were made to complete an interview at every household in the sample. The calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chances of making contact with a potential respondent. Interview refusals were recontacted at least once in order to try again to complete an interview. All interviews completed on any given day were considered to be the final sample for that day. Follow-up interviews were attempted with all 3,533 respondents who completed an interview in March 2000. Successful March 2001 interviews were conducted with 1,501 (42%) of the original respondents.

Non-response in telephone interviews produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. In order to compensate for these known biases, the sample data are weighted in analysis. The demographic weighting parameters are derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (March 2000). This analysis produces population parameters for the demographic characteristics of adults age 18 or older, living in households that contain a telephone. These parameters are then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights. The weights are derived using an iterative technique that simultaneously balances the distribution of all weighting parameters.